

Skinner, B. F. (1976). Farewell, my lovely! *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*, 25, 218.

Evidently we have not long to wait for an issue of JEAB without a single cumulative record! I shall not miss the records so much as the kinds of experiments that could scarcely be reported without them. There is no point in publishing a block of sloping straight lines if the only important fact is the slope; better a point on a graph. But what has happened to the curves that were curves? What has happened to experiments where rate changed from moment to moment in interesting ways, where a cumulative record told more at a glance than could be described in a page? Straight lines and steady states are no doubt important, but something is lost when one must reach a steady state before an experiment begins. There was a special kind of orderliness in a smooth curve lasting a few minutes or at most an hour. It suggested a really extraordinary degree of control over an individual organism as it lived its life from moment to moment. Shall we never again see things as fascinating as the slight overshooting when a pigeon switches from the ratio to the interval phase of a mixed schedule, or learns to use a clock in timing a fixed interval, or "sulks" for an hour after a short bout of fixed-ratio responding injected into a long variable-ratio performance, or slowly accelerates as it raps out "just one more" large fixed ratio on a straining schedule? These molecular changes in probability of responding are most immediately relevant to our daily lives. They seem to me much more useful in the interpretation and design of contingencies which bring about the kinds of changes likely to be of technological interest. There is no denying the importance of the methods and equipment which have been devised for long-sustained research, but there is also much to be said for an experiment that lasts an hour--and for a quick and comprehensive look at the fine grain of the behavior in the cumulative record.